

Introductory Remarks

Strong, well-maintained neighborhoods are a critical component of overall community well-being and quality of life for Montgomery County residents.

To help preserve and enhance neighborhoods, the Department of Housing & Community Affairs (DHCA) is undertaking a pilot initiative to comprehensively address community needs as identified by residents and other stakeholders in two geographically-defined focus areas – one in the Glenmont area of Wheaton (the Mid-County Focus Area), and one in the Gunners Lake/Waring Station area of Germantown (the Up-County Focus Area).

This report on the **Mid-County Focus Area** provides baseline information about the community that can be updated to measure success and offers recommendations that can be further refined to identify specific implementation strategies and short- and long-term objectives.

Thanks to all who contributed to this report.

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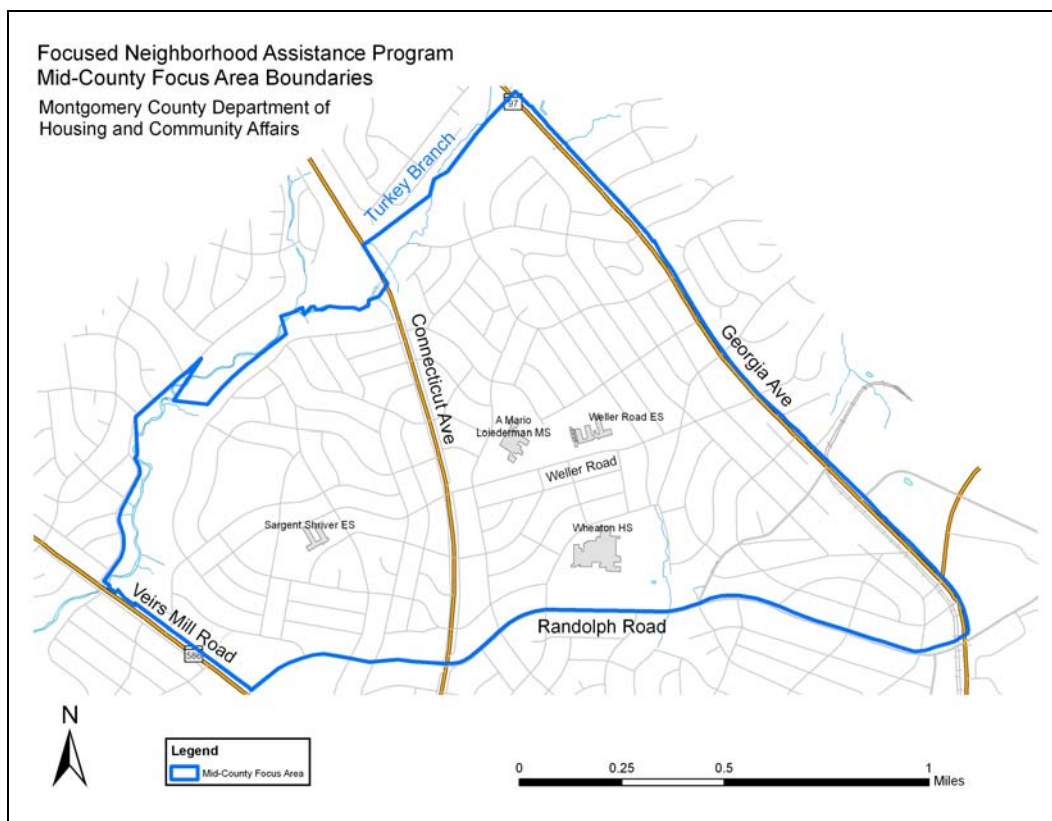
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Focused Neighborhood Assistance Program Mid-County Focus Area

Background

The Mid-County Focus Area covers one and a half square miles, or just about one thousand acres. It is bounded by Georgia Avenue to the east, Randolph Road to the South, Veirs Mill Road to the west, and the Turkey Branch Creek to the north.



The Mid-County Focus Area is primarily residential in nature, with a few institutional and commercial uses including Randolph Hills Nursing Center, several public schools, and the Stonemill Shopping Center. Nearly the entire stock of housing was built between 1949 and 1962 as the post-war boom of modest single-family housing development spread outward from the District of Columbia into the close-by suburbs. As development has continued, the Focus Area has transitioned from being a place on the suburban fringe to an accessible area well connected to the amenities of the metropolitan region. In 1998, regional Metrorail transit service came within walking distance with the arrival of the “Red Line” stop at Glenmont near the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Randolph Road.

Legend

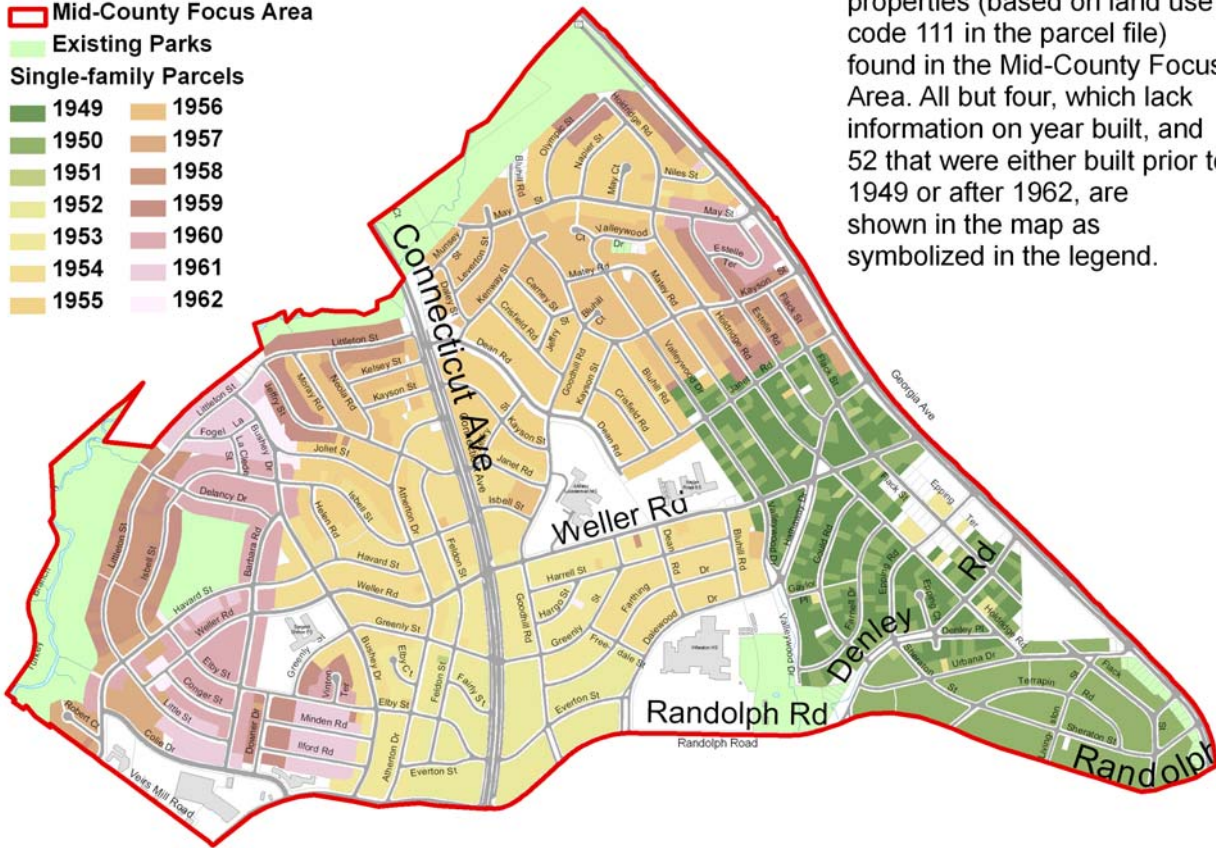
Mid-County Focus Area

Existing Parks

Single-family Parcels

1949	1956
1950	1957
1951	1958
1952	1959
1953	1960
1954	1961
1955	1962

Age of Housing



There are 3,220 single-family properties (based on land use code 111 in the parcel file) found in the Mid-County Focus Area. All but four, which lack information on year built, and 52 that were either built prior to 1949 or after 1962, are shown in the map as symbolized in the legend.

Neighborhood Selection

The Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) has chosen the Mid-County Focus Area as one of only two areas in which to pilot a new initiative in partnership with residents to strengthen and improve their single-family neighborhoods, expecting that the effort can be modified and expanded to other areas as lessons are learned and resources allow.

The selection of this neighborhood was made as the result of a data-driven analysis focused on single-family homes in primarily, if not exclusively, residential neighborhoods and grew from a belief in the importance of strong, well-maintained neighborhoods as a critical component of overall community well-being.

In identifying areas for consideration, we first reviewed data on crime, income (as viewed through the numbers of school-age children eligible for Free and Reduced Meals) and single-family rentals (later refined to focus on foreclosure events) county-wide. These criteria are ones that have been commonly used by others to measure conditions at the neighborhood level, and this analysis identified areas that appeared, from the data reviewed, to be experiencing challenges greater than those being experienced by the County overall. For example, the rate of foreclosure events in this area is 3 times higher than for the county as a whole.

Staff further refined neighborhood selection among the areas identified by looking for commonalities that would facilitate community connections (like school boundaries), or, conversely, serve as likely separators (like natural features or major

roadways). Staff also identified those areas that appeared to already meet eligibility criteria for certain types of federal or state funding; for example, federal funds to assist in mitigating the negative impact of foreclosures.

After touring areas, this community is one that emerged as a strong candidate for this new initiative. Further data gathering specific to the area, through meetings with residents, county representatives and others has confirmed that a partnership is welcome and that this area can benefit from focused neighborhood assistance.



Neighborhood Details

Demographics

According to 2005 Census Update Survey Area, compared to the County as a whole, the Focus Area is more diverse, with residents more likely to speak Spanish. Residents are slightly less affluent than in the County overall, and although generally well-educated, more than one-fifth of adults indicated that they did not have a high school diploma, a figure three times greater than for the County overall. There are fewer single-person households and households are slightly older with slightly fewer school age children. Similar to the rest of the County, most of the residents of the Focus Area indicate that they work in Montgomery County.

The racial breakdown shows a population that is 60% white, 9.7% Black, 13.7% Asian and 16.5% “other.” Of this overall population 41.8% are of Hispanic or Latino decent. More than 60% of the residents speak a language other than English, almost twice the County average, with Spanish being the other language most commonly spoken. Within the area’s population, 23% say they speak English “less than very well,” as compared to only 9.7% countywide.

With the increasing diversity of the Focus Area, some residents are finding it challenging to connect with their neighbors, especially those with limited English proficiency. As one long-time homeowner in the area remarked, “I don’t even know how to say ‘hello’ to some of my neighbors anymore.”

There are four schools located in the Focus Area: Wheaton High School; A. Mario Loiederman Middle School; Sargent Shriver Elementary School and Weller Elementary School. The racial breakdown of each school is indicated in the chart below.

Racial Breakdown of Schools

	American Indian	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Total Enrolled
Wheaton High School	1	155	305	684	139	1284
A. Mario Loiederman Middle School	4	72	240	382	213	911
Sargent Shriver Elementary School	0	75	86	379	56	596
Weller Elementary School	0	55	47	292	39	433
Total Students in Target Area	5	357	678	1737	447	3224

Source: Montgomeryschoolsmd.org; 2007-2008 school year.

The Focus Area has slightly fewer school-age children (5-17 year olds) than the County as a whole, (12.7% compared to 19.1%), with more residents indicating their ages as between 45-64 years. (32.7% compared to 27.5%). While the majority of residents have completed high school or college and nearly 18% have more than a bachelor's degree, 23.5% of adults indicated that they did not have a high school diploma, as compared to only 7.8% in the County as a whole.

Two-person households at 32.7% make up the largest percent of occupants per residence. These figures are followed by three-person households at 22.7%, four-person households at 20.9%, and 5-person households at 14.7% (this last compares to 11% in the County overall). Households with one person were only 9.1%, compared to 23.5% Countywide, much of this due to the fact that, except for a senior living facility, the Focus Area is wholly composed of single-family homes.

Most of the Focus Area residents worked in Montgomery County (63.4%) or Washington, DC, (20.3%), very similar to the overall County averages of 59.9% and 21.5%. However, based on the data from the census update, Focus Area residents had median household annual incomes that were significantly lower, at \$70,605, than median household incomes in the County overall.

Land Use and Zoning

The Focus Area is primarily residential in character with modest-sized, single-family detached homes. The one townhome development in the area, Foxhall Square, is located on the eastern border of the Area boundary. Residential zoning is generally R60, reflecting the single-family character of the Area and denoting that each home must reside on a 6,000 square foot lot.

Commercial uses are located along the western and just beyond the eastern boundaries of the focus area. The Stonemill Shopping Center at Veirs Mill and Randolph Roads (with 124,537 Gross Floor Area in square feet or 'GFA' on 12.49 acres) is the only commercial use actually within the area. Across Veirs Mill Road from that center, is the Randolph Road Crossing Shopping Center (with 47,886 GFA on 3.1 acres). The Glenmont Shopping Center (118,469 GFA on 9.7 acres) lies just east of the area at Georgia Avenue and Randolph Road, and is also frequented by residents. Neighborhood-serving retail uses dominate the mix of stores and benefit from the location along major arterial roads. At the Stonemill Shopping Center, the anchor tenant, the Korean Korner, draws from a large customer base of immigrants that comes for specialty food items. Other businesses, include CVS, Fontera Restaurant, a gas station and a mixture of other local serving businesses. The Glenmont center has a variety of stores, including a popular Motor Vehicle Administration Express, Staples, CVS and a variety of other stores and restaurants.

Plans for the grade separation at the Georgia Avenue/Randolph Road intersection will impact the Glenmont Shopping Center as several businesses adjacent to Randolph Road and Georgia Avenue will require relocation.

The Glenmont Metro Center is expected to spur future development in the vicinity of the station. One proposed project located on Glenallen Avenue between Layhill Road and Georgia Avenue and adjacent to the Wheaton Glenmont Neighborhood Focus is Privacy World/ JBG Companies. To date, the planning board has voted in favor of rezoning the project. The County Council has remanded the project to the Hearing Examiner. A proposal was expected to be presented by the JBG Companies at a public hearing however, the proposed development is currently stalled due to current economic conditions. If the project is approved 352 existing garden apartment units will be demolished and replaced with 90,000 square feet of retail space and 1550 residential and live work units. This project is expected to create an urban street grid with a central park and other public recreation spaces.

Within the Focus Area boundaries, there is also planned construction of both the relocated Fire Station 18 and a five story, 1,200-space Metro Garage. Construction should begin on these projects within the next 10 years.

Open space is to the north with the Matthew Henson State Park, including Turkey Branch Creek. Montgomery County's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) recently completed the first phase of stream restoration to help restore the Turkey Branch watershed, planting additional trees and shrubs and creating a 4.5 mile hiker-biker trail.

Housing

The focus area is comprised of approximately 3,250 single-family homes, one multi-family senior living facility (Randolph Hills Nursing Center with 163 units) and 48 townhouses.

January 2008 Housing Unit Estimates*				
Unit Type	Mid-County Focus Area		Countywide	
	Units	Percent of Total	Units	Percent of Total
Single-Family Detached	3,217	93.8%	180,442	49.4%
Single-Family Attached	48	1.4%	66,996	18.3%
Multi-family	163	4.8%	118,092	32.3%
Total Units	3,428	100.0%	365,530	100.0%
Percent of countywide stock:		0.94%		
*Source: Montgomery County Department of Planning				

Most of the homes are constructed primarily of brick and are smaller in terms of square footage than many families today consider optimal to meet their needs. As such, many owners have expanded their homes by refinishing basements, increasing the number of bathrooms, constructing additions or adding small, free-standing storage units. Originally built with no off-street parking, owners have also added driveways, and in some instances, paved over large portions of their properties to accommodate vehicles, as the numbers of vehicles per household has increased and on-street parking has become inadequate to meet the need. Many homes could also reasonably be expected to benefit from weatherization and other improvements to increase energy efficiency.

Homes in the Focus Area have been disproportionately impacted by foreclosure. There were 5,476 foreclosure events countywide in 2008, with 150 of these occurring in the Focus Area. Foreclosure events in the Focus Area are occurring at a rate that is 2.9 times greater than that for the county as a whole, and community

members are reporting homes that appear vacant, with an increasing number of complaints related to litter, lawn and property maintenance.

The County's Housing Code Enforcement section has experienced increased levels of complaints of overcrowding. Each complaint is investigated.

Transportation

Residents of the Focus Area have a variety of transportation options ranging from personal vehicles to the new hiker-biker trail in Matthew Henson State Park. The Focus Area is well served by public transportation and is conveniently located near major roadways. The "Glenmont" Metrorail stop serves more than 12,000 people per day, and there is regular bus service, provided by both the regional Metrobus and Montgomery County's local Ride-On bus systems. Bus routes in the Area include Metro's C8, Y5, Y7, Y8, and Y9, and Ride-On's 10, 31, 34, 41, 48, 51 and 53 bus routes. Of these, Ride-On bus route 41 goes across Weller Road, right through the Focus Area, while the other buses serve the major State Routes 97 (Georgia Ave.), 185 (Connecticut Ave.), 586 (Veirs Mill Road) and Randolph Road.

While the Focus Area does have a Permit Parking Program, Metro riders continue to park in the neighborhood adjacent to the Glenmont station, contributing to the lack of available parking for residents. A new garage will be designed and built by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority to expand parking near the Glenmont Metro to address the need for additional parking spaces. Additionally, beginning July 1, 2009, drivers will no longer be allowed to park heavy commercial vehicles, buses and recreational vehicles on public roadways in residential areas in the County. According to the residents, large vehicles limit the line of sight and further restrict traffic flow on existing narrow streets.

The part of the Focus Area north of Weller Road (referred to as Greenwood Knolls) has been selected for work through the County Department of Transportation's "Renew Montgomery" program. This project will include sidewalk, curb and gutter installations and road resurfacing.

In terms of walkability, the area is somewhat pedestrian friendly, but there are blocks where sidewalks are absent, forcing pedestrians into the middle of the street, and there is generally the need for additional lighting along paths of travel throughout the community. Residents have also expressed interest in seeing several deteriorated pedestrian walkway paths improved with better lighting to enhance safety. These paths provide mid-block connections between streets as well as access to school and park grounds.

To address traffic congestion and safety concerns, the State Highway Administration is planning improvements to the intersection at Randolph Road and Georgia Avenue, using a grade separation to direct Georgia Ave. traffic under Randolph Road. Sidewalks will be included where appropriate and wide curb lanes will accommodate bicycles. This project will improve traffic flow through the area by providing an underpass for the traffic stream to remain constant.



Public Safety

The Area is well served by close proximity to both the 4th District Police Department and to Kensington Volunteer Fire Department Station 18, both of which are located on Randolph Road.

The Focus Area lies within the 4th Police District and is approximately 4 percent of the defined district boundary. Most felony crimes have increased in 2008 from 2007.

Crime Statistics by Districts – 2008-2007

District 4	2008	2007	% Change
Murder	6	5	20.0%
Rape	25	22	13.6%
Robbery	286	243	17.7%
Aggravated Assault	192	195	-1.5%
Burglary	741	730	1.5%
Larceny	3,435	3,080	11.5%
Auto Theft	511	511	0.0%
Part I	5,196	4,786	8.6%
Part II	9,446	9,583	-1.4%
Total Crime	14,642	14,369	1.9%

Note: The seven felony crimes listed in the breakout above are commonly referred to as "Part I" crimes, and all other police jurisdictions report these statistics to the FBI for their Uniform Crime Report. All other crimes are called Part II.

Source: Montgomery County Police

A number of programs administered by the Police District provide the community with crime prevention and safety precaution materials, and officers assist with Neighborhood Watch and other prevention efforts. Although overall gang related crime was down for 2008, burglaries and robberies were up as were drug offenses and disorderly conduct. The 3rd and 4th districts had the largest increase in robberies, with more than a third “street robberies” involving three or more suspects.

District 4 Officers are actively involved in programs that increase community awareness and provide an in-depth knowledge of gangs and their traits. Gang presence is prevalent in the district and is apparent in the Focus Area.

Active Criminal Street Gangs (MCPD Gang Task-Force Updated 3/7/2006)

<u>Gang Name</u>	<u>Activity Location</u>	<u>Active Members</u>
MS 13	Wheaton CBD	50
Maple Avenue		25
Bloods	Randolph Rd. & Georgia Ave.	20
Crips	Randolph Rd./Georgia Ave./Veirs Mill Rd.	30

Source: Web Site for Montgomery County Department of Police Division/District Stations (District 4)

The Kensington Volunteer Fire Department, Station No. 18 currently serves the Focus Area ; however, this station will be replaced with a new larger and more modern station designed to meet current operational requirements. The new station will be approximately 23,900 gross square feet, will contain 4 bays and include Emergency Medical Services (EMS). Construction will begin in July 2009 and have an estimated completion date of December 2011.

Environmental Issues

The Turkey Branch Creek serves as one of the boundaries of the Focus Area. Turkey Branch flows into Rock Creek, a tributary of the Potomac River, which eventually flows into the Chesapeake Bay. The Turkey Branch

watershed was developed before there were requirements for stormwater management, and impervious surfaces cover about one-third of the entire watershed.

Given this, Turkey Branch was nearly destroyed by fast-flowing stormwater discharges that eroded and damaged the banks and bottom of the stream channel, exposed buried sewer lines and destroyed aquatic habitat. An ongoing stream restoration project is underway, but the amount of impervious surface is continuing to increase as owners pave over portions of their properties to accommodate off-street parking. Proper disposal of trash, yard waste and chemicals is critical to protecting stream water quality. However, proper trash disposal remains an issue in the Focus Area, especially with dumping along the curb, in street medians and along the parkland near the Wheaton/Glenmont Pool and along the Turkey Branch Creek. There is also evidence that the wooded areas are serving as a place for people to drink and “hang out,” leading to trash build up.



The housing stock in the Focus Area is generally 50 to 60 years old, and any home built prior to 1978 may contain lead-based paint. Homes from this period may also contain asbestos materials. Both lead-based paint and asbestos can pose a health hazard when removed or disrupted without proper precautions.

While the community considers the many mature trees to be a neighborhood asset, preservation of the tree-cover is an issue as older trees show signs of stress and are in need of selective pruning. Conflicts with mature trees and power lines are visible throughout this community. Residents report frequent power outages when branches fall across power lines. Removal of stumps is delayed long after trees are removed, both on private property and in the right-of-way, creating maintenance and landscaping challenges.

Information Gathering/Community Outreach

A block-by-block visual survey (see Appendix) was conducted by DHCA staff over a three-week period in February 2009. During the first quarter of 2009, the DHCA team held meetings with County agencies and other organizations to gather input on the assets, issues and needs of the focus area. These meetings provided information from County staff and civic leaders based on their experiences, observations and familiarity with the area. DHCA consulted with representatives from:

- Mid-County Regional Services Center
- Mid-County Citizen's Advisory Board
- Montgomery County Police Department, District 4, including a ride-along
- Maryland - National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC)
- School administrators from Wheaton High School, Loiederman Middle School, and Weller Elementary School and Thomas Edison High School of Technology

- Montgomery County Division of Solid Waste
- DHCA Code Enforcement
- Montgomery County Department of Transportation
- Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service
- Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
- Montgomery County Department of Recreation
- Veirs Mill Baptist Church
- Montgomery Housing Partnership, including outreach to Hispanic population
- Greater Glenmont Civic Association
- Glenmont Civic Association

The summary of all of these meetings can be found in the notes provided in the appendix.

DHCA's staff also held a neighborhood Charrette meeting on March 31, 2009 at the Wheaton High School cafeteria to solicit input from residents of the project area. This Charrette provided an opportunity for the residents to outline their neighborhood's assets, issues and to make recommendations for needed actions.

Community Assets

Location

Residents frequently remark about the convenient location of their community, the ease of access to public safety services, like police and fire, the proximity to public schools, the hospital, libraries, parks, recreation facilities such as the Wheaton/Glenmont Pool, restaurants, banks and shopping. Residents expressed general satisfaction with County services, including leaf pick-up and recycling.

Green Spaces

Residents value the mature trees in their neighborhoods, the proximity to Brookside Gardens and to Turkey Branch Creek, the Matthew Henson State Park and the newly opened Mathew Henson Greenway Trail.

Strong Residential Areas

Residents are generally pleased with the diversity of their neighborhood. They appreciate the character and affordability and many are long-time residents. Although not the only civic association in the Focus Area, the newly-formed *Greater Glenmont Civic Association* is an example of residents' high involvement in community activities. This group is inclusive and is making a positive difference in the community with a web site, events, a growing membership base, regular membership meetings and a newly established Neighborhood Watch group. The neighbors value each other and support initiatives which promote the general welfare of the community.

Housing and Schools

The single-family, detached housing that predominates in the area is generally considered well-built and affordable. Residents also appreciate the choice of school programs and the quality of the Montgomery County Public Schools.

Community Challenges and Recommendations

1. Housing maintenance/vacant properties/code enforcement

Vacant homes, many in some stage of foreclosure, are a community concern. Code enforcement complaints are increasing as lawns go un-mowed, papers and other trash are not disposed of and maintenance is deferred. Complaints of housing overcrowding and an excessive number of cars are also increasing with residents concerned that basements are being occupied without ensuring that they meet Montgomery County's code requirements. Some residents have also expressed concern over the number of properties that are being rented, rather than owned, by their occupants. Some homes are in need of rehabilitation, including some with non-standard accessibility ramps and railings that are in need of repair or replacement. Residents have also expressed concern over high real estate taxes.

Recommendations

- Encourage homeownership through acquisition of vacant, foreclosed properties for sale to owner occupants; rehabilitation grants or loans, including funds for accessibility modifications and energy-related improvements
- Community outreach/education regarding housing-related issues like foreclosure prevention, overcrowding, maintenance and landlord/tenant rights and responsibilities
- Code enforcement, especially monitoring of vacant properties and use of "Clean and Lien" Orders to correct solid waste violations.

2. Infrastructure/lighting/tree trimming

Lack of adequate lighting and sidewalks in certain areas is a safety concern. Residents, particularly women, have indicated that they do not feel as safe walking in their neighborhoods at night as they would if the lighting were better. Others have noted that given the traffic in the neighborhood, lack of sidewalks in some areas is a big concern. Some residents indicated that road improvements were needed to address pot holes and other maintenance concerns.

Residents also continue to be concerned about aging pipes that have led to water main breaks and leaks and power outages often caused by fallen branches given the lack of regular tree trimming. Residents are interested in preserving the tree cover and in the overall health of the mature trees in the community. Lack of regular pruning and removal of dead or diseased trees (in combination with tree planting) is a community concern.

Recommendations

- Provide additional street lighting
- Implement quality tree maintenance program – pruning and planting
- Encourage participation in DOT's "Renew Montgomery" program

3. Deteriorated/misused neighborhood pathways

There exist six well-used but deteriorated, poorly lit pedestrian walkway paths that have become attractive places for loitering, drinking and possible drug activity. Graffiti and trash are common along these dark paths, and residents report gang activity and safety concerns. Some paths have been maintained by neighbors. However, others are overgrown, providing secluded areas and narrow routes of passage.

Recommendations

- Establish a neighborhood “Pedestrian Linkages” program to enhance existing paths
- Provide adequate lighting and sufficient walking surface, where possible, along the six Pedestrian Linkages
- Ensure foliage is trimmed appropriately

4. Parking and Traffic

Lack of parking or illegal parking is frequently cited as a community concern. These concerns include Metro riders parking in the neighborhood, parking that blocks driveway access, commercial vehicles that limit visibility, parking in the right-of-way or on lawns and excessive numbers of vehicles per house (seen as evidence of overcrowding). Residents believe that others have installed concrete aprons and parking pads throughout the neighborhood without obtaining required permits. Residents also express concern regarding cut-through traffic, speeding and drivers who run stop signs.

Recommendations

- Explore additional parking strategies, including off-site parking for commercial vehicles
- Support off-street parking in compliance with the County code through grants/loans for driveways
- Enforce relevant codes regarding parking and untagged or inoperable vehicles
- Explore pedestrian safety measures regarding traffic calming and enforcement
- Community outreach/education regarding parking requirements

5. Solid Waste

In addition to the concerns with vacant properties mentioned above, there is evidence of dumping in wooded areas. Trash or yard waste is sometimes improperly sorted and unacceptable for “regular” pick up. Bulk items are at times simply left at the curbside or in the median. Residents have indicated that more outreach and education is needed about County services in general, but particularly, those concerning recycling, trash and bulk trash pick-up.

Some residents have complained that dumpsters at the Stoney Mill Center are often overflowing and attracting rats.

Recommendations

- Code enforcement to address solid waste complaints and rodent control
- Encourage Adopt-a-Road and community clean-up initiatives
- Bilingual community outreach/education regarding proper solid waste disposal
- Protect and preserve the Turkey Branch Creek watershed area
- Encourage property owners to improve stormwater runoff conditions on their property by using more natural drainage design techniques

6. Need for Youth Activities

Residents, and school staff, express concern over the lack of activities for youth, particularly before- and after-school programs and the lack of appropriate space, preferably at the school, to provide these programs. Residents also expressed concern regarding the lack of summer activities and employment for older youth to deter them from joining gangs. Some residents believe that there is a lack of truancy enforcement and

supervised recreational activities, and others would like to see a neighborhood-serving community center available for use by all.

Recommendations

- Support positive youth development activities in partnership with the schools, youth-serving nonprofits and other County departments
- Identify options for a neighborhood-serving community center

7. Safety and Crime

Residents have expressed concerns regarding safety, especially along bus routes and near the Metro station where muggings have occurred. Inadequate lighting, as noted above, is a problem that possibly contributes to this, as is the increase in crime in general, particularly related to youthful offenders with possible gang involvement. Some residents expressed the need for an enhanced police presence in the area in general. At the Wheaton/Glenmont Pool thefts are common during the summer months, and police and pool staff have said that overgrown vegetation near the pool facility reduces the visibility needed to promote safety for pool visitors.

Recommendations

- Enhance Graffiti abatement efforts
- Promote crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED), including improvement of landscaping treatments at key gateways and along pedestrian paths
- Support efforts to enhance safety at the Wheaton/Glenmont Pool through facility improvements such as secure lockers
- Encourage “Neighborhood Watch” initiatives and other community policing efforts
- Promote pedestrian safety and walkability by enhancing way-finding signage

8. Community Involvement

The diversity of the community and the presence of those with limited English proficiency, make it more challenging to build community cohesion and promote opportunities for community involvement and engagement. Most of the area has no active civic association.

Recommendations

- Encourage residents to proactively report concerns so that these can be addressed by enforcement agencies (eg. Montgomery County Police, Code Enforcement and Permitting Services Departments)
- Conduct outreach and education efforts in Spanish and other languages as needed to inform those with limited English proficiency
- Support and encourage the creation of active civic associations

9. Commercial Areas

Although outside the boundary of the Focus Area, residents expressed the desire to see the Glenmont Shopping Center revitalized with a broader variety of retail choices. There was also concern expressed regarding Stoney Mill Shopping Center, especially concerning overflowing and uncovered dumpsters contributing to a rodent problem.

- Encourage dumpster screening and enforce related code requirements
- Explore revitalization of the Glenmont Shopping Center

Conclusion

Strengthening neighborhoods and supporting communities is an ongoing process and one that requires group effort. The Mid-County Focus Area is facing a number of challenges. Addressing these is predicated on a partnership among community members and public implementation entities in collaboration with nonprofit partners. Involvement will include not only private property owners but, to the extent that commercial properties are involved, business owners as well. DHCA staff, while speaking with many residents and stakeholders, recognizes that community concerns are not static, that priorities change over time and that issues will continue to evolve. We also recognize that not every voice has been heard, and we are committed to continuing our outreach efforts to those with limited English proficiency.

Some of these recommendations are inexpensive to implement and some are costly. Some are already happening and are part of ongoing efforts, others will take years to implement once funding is identified

This report does not include a timeframe for implementation; that is our next step, one that will be determined not only by the financial resources needed and available but also by the human capital and energy residents bring to this effort. We are looking forward to a productive partnership.

Appendix (as follows)

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